

SECRET

25X1

11 July 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence
FROM: Director of Central Intelligence
SUBJECT: Agenda for the NIC

I very much like and thoroughly approve of your agenda for the NIC. I particularly like the incorporation of indicators or warning signs at the end of each estimate and the invocation of greater discipline.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a horizontal stroke.

William J. Casey

25X1

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

25X1

20 June 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : My Agenda for the NIC

1. A number of steps have been taken in the last two years to improve the quality of national estimates and the NIC itself. I have attached the two memoranda I prepared for you over two years ago setting forth the changes that I thought needed to be made in the NIC to make it a viable organization. A number of those have been addressed. Most important, the estimates process has been reinvigorated and many more estimates are flowing out of that process than were at that time. Differences are encouraged and laid out with some specificity, although more so in the military estimates than in the political or economic ones. More recently, Herb Meyer has taken some steps to tighten up the estimates process in terms of moving it more quickly.

2. Nonetheless, there are a number of things that seem to me remain to be done. I divide them into substantive and administrative agendas.

Substance

- Quality Control: More can be done to improve the quality of the drafts and to make them more lively. As mentioned above, other than the military estimates there is still a tendency to submerge differences between the agencies or, more importantly to come up with a single answer when in fact there is considerable uncertainty or several equally likely scenarios. Those alternative scenarios need to be played out more fully in more estimates, together with overall evaluations of likelihood. I also believe that agencies should be identified with those alternative scenarios in the text.

Moreover, we should do more internal quality control in the NIC. There already is a process underway whereby several NIOs review terms of reference and estimates drafts. I would intensify that process and have groups of NIOs interested in or with responsibility for related areas sit down face to face to go through a draft even

Cl By Signer
DECL OADR

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

before you receive it to see that all of the ideas and possibilities have been explored. I would invite the SRP to attend these sessions. This also would further emphasize the collegiality of the NIC. I think this can be done without slowing the process.

I will review all draft estimates as I review all DDI papers. It seems to me that some of the things I have been trying to do with DDI drafts apply also to estimates, including giving the reader a greater appreciation for the kind of evidence we have to support some of our assertions and also the level of our confidence in the evidence and in our judgments. We too often sound more confident than we really are that events will develop in a particular way.

I think it is a mistake for the NIC to send out drafts for coordination by the NFIB representatives saying that you have approved the issuance of the draft for coordination. I believe this commits your or John's authority and prestige too early in the process. While it has not limited your flexibility and willingness to make changes in drafts later, I think it formally engages you too early and also has an inhibiting effect on other agencies in terms of adding their own views. I would propose that we continue to provide you with drafts as has been the practice -- and not send out drafts until you are generally content -- but that the drafts be issued for coordination without reference to your having approved them. In short, we will have the benefit of your and John's substantive comments but you will arrive at the NFIB table in effect unfettered and without having tipped your hand in a formal way. In certain instances this may give you greater flexibility if you wish to disavow a draft and send it back to the drawing board. Perhaps most important, I think it would make it easier for the other agencies to disagree with a text.

- Length of Estimates: You know my views on this. I strongly believe we should head in the direction of a short executive summary that is anywhere from 4-8 printed pages in length and published separately. The full body of the estimate would still be done and published as the Estimate. The executive summary would give the senior reader a very small package to read and yet one long enough to convey the texture and flavor as well as the key points of the main text. I would even do this with the big military estimates where we already publish the key judgments separately. Even those are too long and an NSC level edition laying out the major changes from a preceding military estimate would make it more likely that the most senior officials will read the text of what we say rather than reading a summary of a

SECRET

SECRET

summary prepared by a staffer who doesn't know anything about the subject. These executive summaries would include all differences of view. It can't hurt to try and after we have published several of them we can survey the senior readers to see if (1) they are seeing the short versions and (2) whether they are reading them. If we are wasting our time, we'll go back to the present way of doing business.

- I would incorporate at the end of each estimate to the extent appropriate a list of indicators or warning signs that we would look for as evidence that the forecasts made in the estimate were coming out as predicted or perhaps differently (as was done in the last Mexican estimate). In short, it would tell the policymaker what we consider would be the things to watch for. I also would add a one-page bibliography of major papers done throughout the Community on issues relevant to the subject of the estimate. I would not put this in the executive version, but I think it would be a useful reading list and road map for further elaboration of agency views on specific topics for the senior staff and others who use the full estimates. Finally, I endorse the notion of a post-mortem for each estimate specifying the information gaps identified in the course of drafting the estimate that would then be inserted into the collection requirements process.
- 11-3/8: I would suggest appointing a small review group of four to six people to examine the question of whether 11-3/8 needs to be produced in its full form every year. There are a number of alternatives to the present way of doing business, including doing a full estimate every two years, insuring that it would be produced, for example, after each Presidential election, so there would be a fresh copy on the new President's desk of our forecast on Soviet strategic programs. In the off years, I would propose simply doing an update of the tables and factual information that would be a very short Community agreed statement of changes in the Soviet strategic posture since the preceding year's estimate was completed. This would mean that the sections on general trends and Soviet policy and doctrine and so forth would not have to be done each year. These areas do not change that frequently. This is simply one alternative, but I have long believed that the quantity of resources invested in 11-3/8 every year is unnecessary and that we get so close to the problem by doing it every year that we may miss major or important changes. This review group could talk to policymakers, past and present, as well as those who have been involved in the preparation of these estimates and come up with some recommendations for us.

SECRET

SECRET

Administration

- Discipline: The NIC is acquiring a reputation throughout the Community for having too many people that operate completely on their own without being accountable and that they not only have become security risks but are loose cannons who do not contribute to the process but complicate it. [] is not the only one against whom this charge is made. I believe that the NIOs should operate under the same rules as other employees of the CIA. All contacts with the Hill should be reported in full, preferably before the appointment takes place as well as after, and all contacts with the media should be approved before hand. Equally important, all contacts with foreigners should be approved in advance and a detailed memorandum of conversation submitted. NIOs should seek approval to participate in outside meetings and organizations in the same way that employees of CIA participate -- with prior approval. The practice of slipping papers to senior officials out of channels and without the knowledge of NIC managers or the two of you should no longer be permitted.

25X1

Rules and security regulations with regard to who should have access to certain kinds of documents are more important to apply to the NIC in many respects than any other part of the Agency because many of the members of the NIC are not professional intelligence officers and are accustomed to operating completely on their own. I cannot document the extent to which any of the above problems are widespread in the NIC: I only know that the above are common perceptions. There also is an increasing inclination on the part of collectors, such as the DDO, to withhold things from the NIC or at least not cooperate fully simply because the NIC is not trusted. Only the imposition of discipline and knowledge that the NIC operates under the same strict rules as the rest of the Community can prevent that from worsening and then improve it.

- Orderliness of the Process: Herb's efforts are admirable and I think have had a salutary effect. At the same time Jim Williams' complaint at NFIB last Friday is not uncommon. As there is an effort to accelerate the process we must insure that terms of reference or drafts which have been drifting along for months are not sent out to the NFIB agencies suddenly and with a requirement for very short turn around time -- meaning two or three days. Most of those agencies can't move as fast as CIA and it creates a great deal of bitterness and antagonism toward the NIC and the estimates process when they are forced to turn around something in 24 or 48 hours. It seems reasonable to me

SECRET

SECRET

in scheduling future estimates to allow for a week for the drafting of terms of reference, completion of coordination of the terms of reference one week later, and then move the rest of the draft as quickly as possible. Nominally, I would think two to three weeks would be sufficient for drafting most estimates. I think rather than keep remanding poor drafts, after an agency has tried and failed to come up with a proper draft it should be the responsibility of the NIC (either the NIO, his assistant or the Analytic Group) to fix the draft and bring it into good enough shape to circulate.

- The Analytic Group: The Analytic Group needs to be kept busier and more immediately engaged in the drafting of estimates and IIMs. Publication of research papers, a couple of which have been issued, is inappropriate for the NIC and I would not permit it in the future. Their whole purpose for being there is to draft estimates: that's what they ought to do. (I might add that one of the research papers that was issued was of very high quality so it isn't a substantive problem.)
- Estimate Drafters: I think it would be worthwhile to consider assigning an estimate drafter to the Analytic Group for the duration of the drafting effort and would physically move the drafter to the AG space. This would enable the drafter to concentrate full time on drafting, would underscore that the work is being done for the Community under NIC auspices and conceivably would provide a way to reduce somewhat the size of the AG. It might also help speed the drafting of the estimates and permit much closer oversight of the drafting process by the responsible NIO.
- Role of the NIO: I believe the NIOs should continue to be your principal representatives at IG meetings accompanied, wherever possible, by a lower ranking colleague from the Directorate of Intelligence since the DDI provides most of the short term policy support for the policy process and the NIC. When the NIO cannot go I would propose to substitute a DI office director. I also believe that one virtue of the identification of information gaps in estimates is to give the NIOs some of the responsibility for substantive collection problems that Bill Colby originally envisioned without putting them in the way of the line manager or tasking authorities.
- Intelligence Producers Council: It seems entirely appropriate to me for the NIC to participate in the IPC as an observer. I would propose to add Charlie Waterman as the NIC representative given the kinds of projects that Charlie is working on.

SECRET

SECRET

- Size of the NIC: I propose to freeze the size of the NIC where it presently stands. I will come back to you with further recommendations if I think it has grown too large and, if appropriate, where some reduction in size might be advisable. For example, it was agreed at the outset, if memory serves, that the AG should only amount to somewhere between 10 and 15 people. I do not know how many it has now but I know it should not get any larger than that. I would aim for a nice even dozen.

3. This represents my initial cut at an agenda for the NIC and the measures that I would intend to implement to smooth out and I hope further improve the quality of the product. A lot of ground has been covered in that area already but there are a fair number of bumpy spots particularly in the NIC's relationships with other organizations (less the DDI than some others!). In sum, I guess I contend that the NIC ought to become administratively more bureaucratic and substantively less so. There also needs to be a greater attention to quality inside the NIC. These measures I believe would contribute to the improvement of the process that already has been underway over the last couple of years. We will all have other ideas as we go along.



Robert M. Gates

Attachments:

Fixing the National Intelligence Council, dtd 14May81
Revitalizing the NIC (Part 2), dtd 29May81

SECRET